



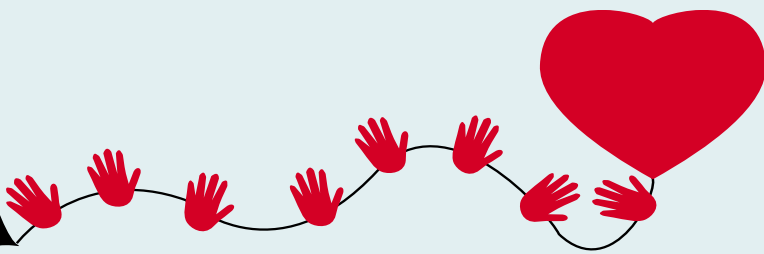
# Maricopa County CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocate Program Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 3

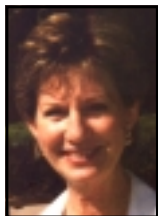
[www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/juvenile/casa/Casa.html](http://www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/juvenile/casa/Casa.html)

October/November 2001



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JUDY CHERVENAK

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**On-Going Peer Group Meeting** – Last Wednesday of every month, 1 p.m., home of Mary Lou Davis.

**Oct. 18, 6:30 p.m.** – Peer Group Meeting, home of Marcia Rysdon.

**October 20, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.** – All day CASA training, ASU Downtown Center.

**Oct. 25** – Case selection meeting.

**Nov. 10, 7 p.m.** – Evening of art, music, wine and cheese at the Tesseract School, 4800 E. Doubletree Ranch Road, Paradise Valley. Sponsored by the Arizona Council for CASA.

**Nov. 20, 6 p.m.** – Peer group meeting, hosted by Jackie Flowers, Executive Towers Community Room, 207 W. Clarendon, Phoenix.

**Please RSVP to our main office for all events:**  
**602.506.4083**

## CASAs invited to Celebrate Adoption

Adoption is a joyful event in Juvenile Court - marked by smiles, love and the sense of accomplishment. It is normally a private proceeding and the public rarely has witnessed a new family's happiness when the court finalizes their adoption.

Superior Court in Maricopa County is lifting the shroud of secrecy and letting the public in to watch and learn more about the adoption process. CASAs and their friends are invited to participate in "Celebrate Adoption" on Saturday, November 3.

Judicial officers and court officials encourage CASAs and welcome the public and the media to witness final adoption proceeding at the second annual Celebrate Adoption event. Court hearings begin at 9 a.m. and are expected to conclude by 3 p.m. at Superior Court's Central Court Building in downtown Phoenix, located at 201 W. Jefferson.

Of the more than 1,000

adoptions finalized in Juvenile Court last year, 42 cases representing 59 children were conducted during the inaugural Celebrate Adoption event that took place on Nov. 4, 2000.



*A 2000 Celebrate Adoption event visitor*

During this unique event, members of the community are also invited to attend educational sessions hosted by lawyers and a variety of other adoption experts who will discuss the adoption process. These seminars are scheduled throughout the day in the

Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Auditorium and in conference rooms next to the courthouse. Information tables, hosted by a variety of adoption agencies, will be nestled on the plaza outside the courthouse where the public can have questions answered by professionals and obtain useful brochures, pamphlets and other material.

Last year's celebration, attended by an estimated 300 adults and children, featured 16 education sessions about the adoption process. More than 20 adoption service providers participated in the event.

The Celebrate Adoption Planning Committee hopes to build on last year's success and continue to raise public awareness of the adoption process,

**Continued Page 5**

### **A message from Judge Linda Scott** Presiding Juvenile Court Judge

It has been suggested that CASAs might like to submit questions to me that may be of general interest to other CASAs.

This could be an excellent way to communicate concerns about the responsibilities and expectations of CASAs and clarify court processes and

procedures that may be confusing, among other things.

If you are interested in submitting questions of a general nature, that are not case-specific, please send them to Bonnie Marcus,



CASA Office, 1810 South Lewis Street, Mesa AZ. 85210. The questions also can be e-mailed to her at:

[bmarcus@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov](mailto:bmarcus@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov)

Appropriate questions will be answered to provide general information to all CASAs to help them with their work.

Questions and answers will be printed in the CASA Newsletter.

# CASA Kudos

## From Court and Staff:

**Jackie Flowers** was commended by Judge David R. Cole and the Guardian Ad Litem on her case.

**Mary Ann Stanton:** "The Guardian Ad Litem's representative and the parties have all concurred that the CASA has done an outstanding job in her position with respect to the children."

**Peiggi Clements** for an excellent, well written report and for her efforts to help the child.

"She truly exemplifies what we want to see in a CASA," said **Candy Dahl**, Assistant Attorney General.

The case manager has commended **Laurie Laughlin** and the team for the progress made in their case, as a result of all parties efforts.

## CASA Farewell

We are saddened to report that CASA volunteer George DuPre was killed tragically in a motorcycle accident on July 12, 2001.

George joined our program last November, served on two cases, and was in the process of establishing a non-profit corporation for the benefit of dependent children.

We will miss George's inspiration, endless enthusiasm and dedication to supporting and advocating for the best interests of children in the State care system.

**F**ormer CASA Coordinator Mark Koch has taken a position with the Administrative Office of the Courts as the Detention Specialist.

## Items Available

Arizona Council for CASA, Inc. has donations of backpacks, including some school supplies, from the Kappa Alpha Theta Foundation, which are now available

to CASA children. Also available are blankets and quilts donated by Blankets for Kids.

If your CASA children are in need of these items, please call the CASA office, and you will be directed to the appropriate person to contact.

## From the Foster Care Review Board:

- June Anderson
- Angela Ashley
- Barbara Bean
- Terry Doeppen
- Deborah Donofrio
- Til Dunlop
- Mary Jo Foster
- K.C. Gill
- Carolyn Hubbard
- Laurie Laughlin
- Kaye McCarthy
- Francien Randall
- Karen Rubsam
- Donna Shemer
- Judy Stratford
- Pat Willis

## CASA Welcome

The following CASAs have completed orientation and are joining the ranks of active volunteers.

Welcome:

- Joanna Antosz
- Kara Ashcraft
- Susan Boehringer
- Kim Briswalter
- Dave Brown
- Linda Carthen
- Carla DeBoer
- Alison Ewing
- Barbara Franklin
- Adele James
- Victoria Konrath
- Dan Miller
- William Pittman
- Frank Siciliano
- Carole Singleton
- Kirsten Snyder
- Kelly Weigand
- Barney Wolfson



## Logs, logs, logs

The Maricopa County CASA Program is continually striving to improve the quality of our work for Juvenile Court.

Certainly the most important aspect of our job as CASA volunteers is our relationship with our CASA children, and our continued advocacy for these children through our work on the case management team and in court.

One of the **paper-work** requirements for CASA volunteers is the completion and submittal of monthly logs to the county office. These logs are an invaluable tool in keeping your Coordinator abreast of your activity (along with monthly phone contact as well) In addition, the logs allow the CASA office to tally the number of hours that volunteers dedicate to their cases.

A review of the last six months reveals that we are continuing to improve our statistics in this area. We have gone from receiving logs from 25 percent-35 percent of active volunteers to 40 percent. This is encouraging, but we still have a long way to go. Please renew your commitment to submit logs on a monthly basis. They are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month, and can be submitted on computer disk, or on hard copy through the mail.

We so appreciate your service to the CASA children you serve and have served in the past.

## Happy Birthday CASAs

10/2	Ralph Corson	10/17	Frank Siciliano	11/03	Patricia Holmes
	Jill Lindstrom	10/18	Gilda Czerwonka	11/05	Laurie Laughlin
10/4	Angela Ashley	10/24	Karen Jensen	11/13	Claudia Crittenden
10/06	Brad Tebow		Debra Phelan	11/14	Nanette Kerr
10/10	Monica Eggen	10/26	Jerome Goldstine	11/16	Victoria Avina
10/12	Barney Wolfson	10/27	Rochelle Stern	11/22	Marilynne Clancy
10/14	MaryLou Davis	10/28	Mark Salem	11/23	Linda Carthen
	Lori Kirk	10/29	Judith Peirce		Mary Denz
10/15	Doreen Sweiss		Joanne Wastchak	11/24	Sally Smith
10/17	Linda Nokes	10/30	Lori Ohmart	11/25	Donna Shemer
		10/31	Kaye McCarthy	11/27	Marilyn Priebe
		11/02	Michelle Wright	11/30	Georgia Clubb

# CASA experience tops in 18 years of volunteerism

Little E. had 18 fractured bones in the 18 months since his birth. He was removed from his natural mother's home and placed in foster care to protect him from alleged physical abuse. A volunteer, Judy Chervenak, became the CASA assigned to his case.

It was a medical diagnosis, made through dental x-rays, that alerted doctors – and Judy – that the child may be suffering from a brittle bone disease. The case evolved from a matter of suspected abuse, to a case of a parent lacking the knowledge to care for a child with the disease known as Osteogenesis Imperfecta, more simply referred to as O.I.

Little E's file was transferred from Child Protective Services to the Division of Developmental Disabilities, so Little E. could receive the services his brittle bone disease warranted. Over the course of two years, a case plan of family reunification was established and eventually Little E. was returned to his mom.

In her role as a CASA, Judy educated herself and all the interested parties in the care of a child with O.I. and advocated for the services available to insure a good life for Little E.

Encouraged by this outcome and her role in its final conclusion, Judy accepted a second appointment and then a third. In her 18 years of dedicated volunteerism, she said the three and one-half years as a

## Volunteer Profile

By Liz Osborn

### Judy Chervenak

CASA have been the most rewarding by far.

"CASAs are one-on-one for a long enough time to make a change in a child's life and we can see the difference we make," she said of the satisfying work as a CASA.

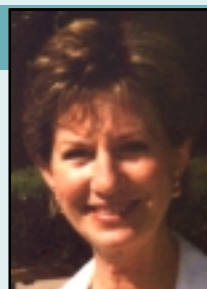
Advocating for her CASA kids, Judy ventured into a world she did not know. She learned of diseases and disorders she had not heard of before.

She investigated the plight of abused and neglected children and saw the agony of families forced to be separated. She understands the difficult journeys that case workers travel each day, important role of legal guardians and necessity of court appearances.

Judy learned from teachers and physicians, therapists and parents, but especially, from the children. She researched libraries and attended seminars. She visited a mother in prison, observed a therapy session for reactive attachment

disorder and was present for the preoperative and postoperative procedures when little E. had metal rods implanted in both of his legs.

Judy has seen parents



“I really did make an impact. I gave my heart and soul to the program.”

who love their children but cannot take care of them, parents who can take care, but don't, and foster parents who sacrifice themselves to make a place for one more child in their home.

Before CASA, Judy worked in domestic abuse shelters and was an aide to Sister Luca, a Catholic nun who ministered to the poor in Phoenix.

Walking with Sister Luca and knocking on front doors to bring food and clothing to impoverished families, prepared Judy for the close, person-to-person interaction CASAs must embrace in order to be effective.

She admits while engaged in her work as a CASA, the education and background of the people around her occasionally intimidated her.

"But once I met the child, boy, it was easy then. I just rolled up my sleeves and went to work," Judy said. "I could not help but fall in love with

these kids."

For now, other responsibilities prevent Judy from having the time needed to continue her work as a CASA. But she does not rule out the possibility of returning someday in the future.

The lessons she learned have made her an invaluable resource for other CASAs. She willingly talks about her CASA experiences, which can be helpful in helping current CASAs improve their skills.

What worked well for Judy, and what she thinks works well for every CASA, is reading and rereading the child's case file, looking at the history with a fresh and objective eye.

She says that CASAs must do their own thinking and if they have a different viewpoint, they should have the self-confidence to present it.

Judy's success as a CASA is not surprising in light of her personal achievements as well.

She married her high school sweetheart from Pennsylvania and traveled a long educational journey with him as he completed medical school, internship and residency.

As a stay-at-home mom, Judy dedicated herself to raising their three daughters to become successful adults. One daughter is a child psychiatrist, another is an architect and the third is the managing editor of a local magazine.

Judy, who now has grandchildren, holds the CASA program dear in her heart. As a CASA, she was able to put her best talents to good use.

"My forte is with children," she said.

### CASA Snapshot

Current Volunteers  
**222**

Active Volunteers  
**175**

Cases with CASAs  
**184**

Children being Served  
**352**



# Coordinator's Corner

By Laurie Laughlin



Too often, brothers and sisters are not placed together when they are removed from their homes. Not only are they separated from their parents, now they are without their siblings. Case managers cannot always find the time to coordinate sibling visits, but the CASA can and often will.

CASAs can serve as a crucial component to a child's advocacy. Throughout my experiences with the CASA program, a recurring key element is the concept of teamwork.

As part of the screening process, prospective volunteers are asked, during their initial interview, to provide their own working definition of what constitutes teamwork, and to describe in their own words what it means to them to be a team member.

In training, we educate CASAs on team building at our earliest opportunity. It is one of the most important aspects of effective advocacy on behalf of Arizona's foster children.

Past experience suggests that each time a child comes into the child welfare system as a dependent ward of the state, there is a team of approximately 17 individuals in place to work on their case. Team members include the attorneys, the parents, the extended family members, the foster parents, the surrogate parents, the parent aides, the therapists, the doctors, the educators, the case managers and the CASA volunteers. These professionals come together to form the team, working in tandem with one another on the assigned case.

Once a CASA selects a case, the Presiding Juvenile

Laurie Laughlin became a volunteer with the Maricopa County CASA Program in July 1999, and continues to advocate on behalf of a foster child, working with a group of professionals that comprise the team working on the case.

An employee of Superior Court in Maricopa since 1993, she moved from a supervisory job with the court's civil administration department in October 2000 to become Assistant Program Manager for CASA.

Among her responsibilities, she works with other volunteers and interacts with professionals from other agencies.

Judge signs an Order of Appointment, which is forwarded to all of the interested parties to the case. This Order grants each volunteer access to the children, as well as to the educational, therapeutic, medical, CPS and court records related to the dependency. Specifically, the Order provides as follows:

***"ORDERED all public and private agencies and individuals, without limitation, who possess records and information about any child herein, and the extended family of any such child, shall allow this CASA volunteer access to the child and such***

***records and information, including the copying thereof, without consent of the child, parents or extended family thereof."***

CASAs are given broad discretion in how best to use the power vested in them by the Court to advocate for the children. As part of the team working on the children's behalf, however, each CASA must take into consideration the best interests of the child first and foremost. In particular, while we, as volunteers, are able to focus our efforts on one case at a time, we need to remember to be sympathetic and patient with the rest of the team, who have numerous clients requiring their attention as well. Given the heavy caseloads of the case managers, attorneys and other team members, CASAs have a unique advantage when working their cases. Accordingly, an attitude of cooperation and mutual respect will insure that the focus remains on the children, superseding conflicts of personality, practice and protocol.

Each CASA is encouraged to continue the legacy of excellence, dedication and commitment that we see demonstrated over and over again by CASAs. The team can only be as good as the sum of each member in relation to one another, where they are equally valued for their efforts and held to the same degree of professionalism.

Teamwork is also an essential link between each CASA volunteer and their respective coordinator. The Program Staff forms another team that supports the work of each volunteer representing dependent children. We make ourselves available to answer questions, review CASA court reports, collect monthly

contact logs, attend hearings with or without the volunteer, schedule training, coordinate peer group meetings, forward notices on pending court dates and serve as the clearinghouse for all the paperwork involved in the assigned cases. The bottom line is, we are here to assist in any capacity, just ask.

In my role as a CASA coordinator, I need to maintain ongoing, monthly contact about the case with each volunteer I supervise, and initiate that contact when appropriate. As a CASA volunteer, I am required to contact my coordinator with an update on my case at least once a month or more if necessary.

CASAs are an integral member of the team working on behalf of dependent children in juvenile court. We are court-appointed, in essence serving as officers of the court, vested with the authority provided by the Order of Appointment. It is a powerful tool, but it is to be used with a great deal of restraint and caution, to build bridges, not walls, with the other team members.

CASAs never want to find themselves the center of attention on their individual cases, inadvertently steering the team away from the needs of the children. Rather, CASAs are one more voice, singing in harmony with many others, sometimes loudly, sometimes softly and, at times, to a different beat.

With teamwork and determination, however, we can insure that we are always advocating for that safe, permanent home that each child deserves and needs to grow.

Everyone on the CASA staff feels it is a privilege to help you help children.

# Each One Reach One

*From La Donna Moss*

## Speakers Bureau

The "Each One Reach One" Kickoff was a great success. Our own CASA Volunteer, Gregory Broberg, conducted the training focused on tips on polishing up our presentation skills and techniques on how to put our best foot forward for CASA.

If you missed the kickoff event and would like to join the Speakers Bureau, please let us know. The training requires you to watch a training videotape and read some educational materials.

## Helpful Response

Many of you called with suggestions and sent in your surveys. You all are doing a wonderful job distributing the materials we have.

## Looking to the Future

Our Light of Hope event is set for Saturday, April 6, 2002. The theme of the event, "Celebrate the Light," will be incorporated in the messages of dynamic speakers.

Activities are planned for children and families and multi-cultural entertainment will be featured.

The public and media are encouraged to participate in the event which will hopefully raise awareness of child abuse and the need for more CASA volunteers.

## Reminder

Keep reaching out to others. Help to expand our volunteer base and reach new people willing to speak out for Arizona's dependent children.

Keep up the good work!

# Off to the races



Sack races were part of the recent annual CASA picnic. The event gives CASA children a chance to be with their CASA while having fun with other kids. It is also a wonderful opportunity for Coordinators to spend time with their volunteers.



## Adoption, From Page 1

create excitement about adoptions and identify and recruit prospective adoptive parents to provide a permanent placement for children. Maricopa County, with the assistance of Board of Supervisor Chairman Janice Brewer, recently joined the planning committee to sponsor this year's event. Celebrate Adoption began as an idea of the Juvenile Court Permanency Planning Implementation Team nearly two years ago. The Team is responsible for implementing changes in the law and rules that affect processing dependency cases. These changes may result in an expedited ruling of termination of parental rights, freeing children for adoption faster than had previously been possible.

## Arizona CASA program adopts new policies for volunteers

**Kyle Davis** Arizona CASA Program Resource and Technical Specialist

Policies of the Arizona CASA Program have been reviewed, revised and adopted and will affect CASA volunteers in Maricopa County and around the state.

Earlier this year, Juvenile Court judges, CASA volunteers, administrators and county staff evaluated and made recommendations on proposed revised policies. The comments were reviewed and all feedback was considered in adopting the new policies.

CASA volunteers will receive the newly adopted policies over the next few weeks. It is also expected that the new policies will soon be available on the state CASA web site at [www.supreme.sp.state.az.us//dcsd/news1tr](http://www.supreme.sp.state.az.us//dcsd/news1tr) - click on the arrow in the CASA box, select Policy Manual.

Following are some of the changes:

- Because of confidentiality laws and concerns, court reports cannot be sent by e-mail. Confidentiality is not guaranteed on the world wide web.

- The number of required in-service training hours has been increased from six to 12 hours per calendar year. CASA volunteers need to complete and document at least nine credit hours by December 2001. Volunteers will need to complete 12 credit hours every year thereafter.

- A volunteer shall be appointed to no more than two cases at one time as an advocate. Any additional case assignments shall be at the discretion of the county coordinator.

- To become a volunteer mentor, certain qualifications must be met. For example, mentors must have at least one year's experience as a CASA

volunteer and must meet and/or exceed all minimum performance standards (for example, submitting Contact Logs monthly).

- Volunteer mentors, under the direct supervision of a coordinator, may now provide Pre- and Post-Orientation Training; screen new dependency cases for appropriateness of assignment; attend staffings, FCRB meetings and court hearings; and, may facilitate volunteer support groups.

It is important that CASA volunteers succeed in their advocacy efforts. The goal of the Arizona CASA Program is to provide quality service. Training insures that success. After all, volunteers are helping our future: The children of Arizona. If you have any questions about any of the adopted policy changes, please contact your county coordinator for more information.

# CASA Contacts and Information

## Locations

## Program Staff

### Durango

3125 West Durango, Suite 130  
Phoenix, AZ 85009

Leslie Blakley	602.506.4082
La Donna Moss	602.506.3930
Laurie Laughlin	602.506.3934
Esperanza Tavena	602.506.4415
Otis R. Evans	602.506.4425
Mavis Monson	602.506.4083

### Southeast

1810 South Lewis Street  
Mesa, AZ 85210

Rita Flores	602.506.3935
Bonnie Marcus	602.506.3379

  
CASA Program  
Juvenile Court Center  
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Phoenix, AZ. 85009